

CRITICAL REVIEW ON ARTAVA KSHAYA WITH SPECIAL RESPECT TO OLIGOMENORRHEA AND HYPOMENORRHEA**¹Dr. Mofidul Islam and ²Dr. Yanbeni Humtsoe**

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ABSTRACT

The term "Artava" encompasses menstrual blood, ovum, hormones, and associated secretions, while "Kshaya" denotes reduction or cessation. According to classical texts, Artavakshaya is described as irregularity in menstruation (Yathochitakala Adarshanam), scanty (Alpata), lasts less than 3 days, and may involve vaginal pain (Yonivedana). Artava Kshaya is also seen as one of the manifestation of the Yoni vyapad as like Arajaska/Lohitkshaya Yonivyapada & Vatala Yonivyapada, along with ksheen Artava dusti and Jataharini. Primary etiological factors include Apan Vayu vitiation, Dhatu imbalance, excessive hot foods, over-medication, and srota avarodha. The pathogenesis involves a complex interplay of dosha disturbances and dhatu deficiencies, impacting normal menstrual function. From a modern medical perspective, Artava Kshaya aligns with conditions like oligomenorrhoea and hypomenorrhoea. Treatment in Ayurveda focuses on both Samshodhana (purification) and Samshamana (pacification) approaches.

KEYWORDS: Artava Kshaya, Garbhashayashodhana, Oligomenorrhea & Hypomenorrhea, YoniYapad, Yathochitakala Adarshanam, Alpata, Yonivedana.

INTRODUCTION

^[31]Menstruation requires coordinated hormonal activity, a responsive endometrium, and a patent outflow tract. The menstrual cycle spans from the start of one period to the next, typically lasting 4–5 days with 20–80 mL blood loss (average 35 mL), mostly in the first 2

days. Menstrual discharge includes blood, mucus, vaginal cells, endometrial fragments, prostaglandins, enzymes, and bacteria.^[13] In Artavakshaya, menstruation is irregular (Yathochitakala Adarshanam), scanty (Alpata), lasts less than 3 days, and may involve vaginal pain (Yonivedana). Per Acharya Vagbhata, vata and kapha dosha obstruct Raktamarga, preventing proper menstrual flow. This correlates with oligomenorrhea (cycles >35 days) and hypomenorrhea (scanty bleeding <2 days). Studies show 13.5% and 12.95% prevalence of oligomenorrhea^[31] and hypomenorrhea, respectively. Due to their high prevalence, understanding the etiology, pathogenesis, symptoms, and treatment of Artavakshaya is crucial.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To study the critical aspects of Artava Kshaya with special reference with oligomenorrhea and Hypomenorrhea.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

Artava Paribhasha

- That which is produced from Rasa and flows every month for three days in the females is called Ārtava. The process starts after twelve years and ceases after fifty years. It flows out from Apatyamarga without pain, burning sensation and slimminess.
- In different context, Artava denotes menstrual blood, ovum, female hormones etc. The terms used in different context for menstrual blood are - Ārtava, Shonita, Ashrika, Raja, Rakta, Lohita, Rudhira, Pushpa.

Ārtava Pravritti Kāla and Nivrittikāla

- All Ācharyas have mentioned twelve years as the age of menarche except Ācharya Kāshyapa and he has mentioned this age as sixteen years.(K. S. Sā. 4/4).
- All Samhitas mention the onset of Artava Nivritti (menopause) at 50 years.

Shuddha Ārtava Lakshana

1) Varna (Colour)

- ❖ Gunjaphala
- ❖ Padma (Rakta Kamal)
- ❖ Alaktaka
- ❖ Indragopa
- ❖ Sasha Asrika

❖ Laksha Rasa

❖ Ishat Krishna

Yogaratanakar, Madhav Nidan and Bhavprakash have given similar descriptions like Charaka and Sushruta Samhita.

2) **Gandha** (Odour)

1. Madhugandhi

2. Visrata Āmagandhitva

Ācharya Sushruta says that the Rakta has Visragandha due to Prithivi Mahābhoota, and same can be considered for Ārtava.

3) **Mātrā** (Quantity)

- According to Vagbhatta, it is four Anjali Pramana.
- Due to Variation of Desha, Kāla, Āhara, Vihāra, Prakriti etc. quantity of menstrual blood also changes.

4) **Samgathana** (Constitution)

- The composition of Ārtava is Panchabhautik with the predominance of Prithvi, Jala and Teja Mahābhootas.
- Vāyu helps it to flow whereas Akāsha Mahābhoota gives it the necessary space and Laghutā.

5) **Karya** (Function)

“Shuddh artava” prepares the Garbhashaya for receiving the product of conception after fertilization as well as growth and development of the fetus.

Ārtava Utpatti Hetu

Ancient Ācharya have enumerated the following factors as Ārtava Utpatti Hetu

1. Kāla
2. Dhatu paripoornata
3. Karma
4. Swabhava
5. Vāyu

Formation of Ārtava

In classics the origin of Ārtava has been mentioned as

- A. From Rasa Dhātu (according to Acharya Charaka, Sushruta, Astanga Hridaya and Dalhana)
- B. From Raktadhatu (According to Astanga Samgraha)
- C. From Āhara Rasa (According to Arunadutta)
- D. As Upadhātu of Rakta (According to Bhava Prakash)
- E. Chakrapāni said that during the process of formation of Ārtava, it is Saumya due to influence of Rasa, while at the time of its excretion, it assumes Āgneya character due to specific changes similar to Rakta.

Ritu Chakra

- The period extending from the onset of menstrual flow to the beginning of the next one is called Ritu Chakra. All the Ācharyas mentioned this period is for one month.

Stages of Ritu Chakra

The entire period of one month of Ritu chakra is divided into three phases.

- 1) Rajasrava Kāla: 3 or 5 days –Vata Pradhanakala
- 2) Ritu Kāla: 12 or 16 days –Kapha Pradhanakala
- 3) Rituvyatita Kāla: The days between Ritu Kāla and next Rajasrava Kāla-Pitta Pradhanakala.

Rajasrava Kāla

Different views of various Ācharyas on Rajasravakala are as follows

- 3 days – (B. P. Pu. Kh. Garbha 2/204)
- 3 nights – (A. S. Sā. 1/10); (A. H. Sā. 1/7)
- 5 nights – (Ch. Chi. 30/225)
- 7 days – (H. S. Sashthasthana 1/9); (B. S. Sā. 5/6)
- 5 days (medium) Bhavaprakasha (Pu. Kh 2/204)
- 16 days (scanty)

Ritu Kāla

The ritukala is considered as the most fertile period of female reproductive cycle.

- ❖ The reconstruction of tissue or proliferation is done by Prithvi and Jala in this stage. Prithvi and Jala are the Bhoutika components of Kapha and this stage is dominated by Kapha.
- ❖ The Artava in this stage is of Soumya in nature or having characteristics like Kapha.

Different views on duration of Ritu Kāla are

- 12 nights (Su. Sā. 3/4)
- 12 nights or 16 nights or whole month (A. S. Sā. 1/40; A. H. Sā. 1/27)
- 16 nights (B. P. and H.S.)

Nirukti Artava Kshaya

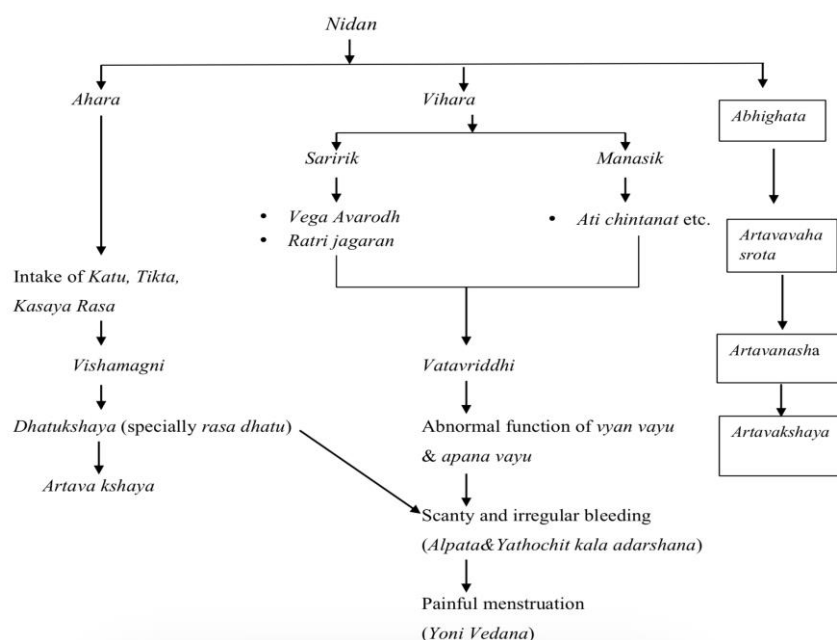
- Artava Kshaya word is derived by combination of two words viz “Artava” and “Kshaya”.
- **Ritod Dhavam Artavam** refers to a body substance that flows out at a specific time or period is as called Artava.
- Kshaya word is derived from “Kshi” dhatu means to cease or to get reduced. According to Charaka kshaya is Hrasa, Nyunata.

Paribhasha of Artava Kshaya

- **Acharaya Sushruta**^[13] explained symptoms of Artava Kshaya as Yathochita Kaala Adarshanam (menstruation does not appear at its appropriate time or it is delayed or prolonged intermenstrual period), Alpa Artava Pravrutti (scanty menstruation), Yonivedana (vaginal or lower abdominal pain).
- **Dalhana** added when Artava Srava Kaala is less than three days or Artava darshana does not take place after one month and reduced Artava Pramana is associated with Yoni Vedana.^[3]
- **Bhavaprakasha**^[7] along with above symptoms added that she desires Katu, Amla, Lavana Rasatmaka and Ushna, Vidahi and Guru Ahara. These are all qualities opposite of Vata and vitiated Vata results Artava Kshaya. Women desire for a Dravya which helps in Vata Shamana and Pitta Vriddhi.
- **Acharya Bhela** has described that even though the blood circulates throughout the body, it cannot nourish Artava due to Vikruti and Raktalpata that leads to Artava Kshaya. Sushruta description is clinical feature, whereas Bhela has elaborated upon etiopathogenesis of the disease.

Nidana of Artava Kshaya

- A. The factors responsible for Artava Utpatti if vitiated by any cause lead to Artava Kshaya. These factors are taken as Nidana of Artava Kshaya. The Vitiated Ahara, Agni (Jathragni, Rasagni), Rasadhatu and Artavavaha Srotas are main factors for Artava vitiation. Artava is Pitta pradhana Agneya in nature. So opposite Vata Kaphavardhaka Ahara Vihara are Vishesha Nidana of Artava Kshaya.
- B. Sushruta has clearly mentioned that, main causative factor that come into action in the production of Artava Kshaya are Vata and Kapha Dosha in combined form.
- C. Acharya Vagbhata said that, Vata, Pitta and Kapha in combined form are main causative factors for Artava Kshaya (Ksheenartava).



Samprapti

Samprapti Ghatak

- Nidan: Guru, Shita, Snigdhaahar, Vega dharan, Ratrijagaran etc.
- Dosa: Vata and kapha
- Dushya: Rasa, Rakta
- Srota: Rasavahasrota, Artavavahasrota
- Srotadushti: Sanga
- Adhisthana: Yoni

Purvaroop

Poorvarupa of Artava Kshaya is not described in any classics. In Bhavaprakasha specific desire of the women suffering from artava kshaya have been enlisted i.e women desires Katu, Amla, Lavana, Ushna, Vidahi, Guru ahara, Phala shakas (brinjal, pumpkin etc) and Beverages.

Rupa^[13]

The following interpretations are considered for

Sl.no	Symptoms	Grade 0	G 1	G 2	G 3
1	Duration of flow (<i>Alpata</i> in relation to rajasravakala)	4-7 days	3-4 days	3-2 days	2-1 days
2	Interval between two cycles (<i>Yathochit kala adarshanam</i>)	26-35 days	36-45 days	46-55 days	>55 days
3	Amount of blood loss (<i>Alpata</i>)	>= 3pads/day	2 pads/day	1 pad/ day	Only spotting
4	Grade of pain (<i>Yoni Vedana</i>)	No pain	Mild	Moderate	Severe

CHIKITSHA

The main objective of chikitsa is samprapti vighatana. This mainly can be achieved in following ways

- 1) Nidana Parivarjan
- 2) Swayoni vardhana dravyas
- 3) Samshodhana
- 4) Use of agneya dravyas

1) Nidana Parivarjanam

“Samksepatha: kriyayogo nidana parivarjanam”

For curing the diseases and avoiding their recurrence, avoidance of causative factors is essential. In Artava Kshaya, Hetus should be avoided in order to get permanent relief.

2) Swayoni vardhana dravyas

“Tatrapati swayonivardhana dravyopayoga”

Swayoni Vardhana means those measures which are useful for growth of the dhatus and increase factors favoring menstruation. The drugs Raktha Vardhaka or Artava Janaka can be

used here. katu, amla, lavana, ushna, vidahi and guru gunas are enlisted by Bhavapraksha in Artava Kshaya.

3) **Samshodhana**^[20-22]

A) Vamana karma

- Vamana removes the Soumya dhatu, resulting into relative increase in agneya constituents of the body & finally causes increase in Artava.^[21]

B) Virechana^[21,22]

- Virchana should not be done according to dalhana. Due to virechana the pitta dosha is reduced which in turn decreases artava.
- Charakapani explains that both vamana & virechana are used to clear urdhva & adho srothas respectively.

C) Basti (Enema): Artava Kshaya is treatable by Basti.^[21]

- Anuvasana Basti (oil enema) and Uttara Basti (enema into the uterus) can be beneficial.

D) Nasya (Nasal Administration): Can be given with ginger juice (adrak swaras).

“4) Use of **agneya dravyas**”^[21]

“**Agneyaanam cha dravyaanamithi tilamashasurasuktadinaam**”

In Artava Kshaya there is qualitative Kshaya of Pitta and quantitative Kshaya of Artava. The use of Agneya Dravyas is beneficial in Artava Kshaya because of Agnivardhaka and Pittakara properties that helps in Samprapti Vighatana. So Pittavardhaka Dravyas like Tila, Masha, Sura and Shukta should be used in treatment of Artava Kshaya.^[21]

Samshamana Aushadhi

1. Kwatha

- Tila, Karvi, Guda Kwatha.
- Krishna Tila Kwatha with Guda; Mishreya, Methika, Muli, Garjara, Shatapushpa Kwatha.

2. Choorna^[7]

Shtapushpa Choorna, Shatavari Churna Jyotishmati, Sarjikshara, Rajika, Ugra, Asana Choorna.

3. Vati

Raja Pravartini Vati, Ritukari Vati, Kanyalauhadi Vati, Boladi Vati, Nashta Pushpantka Rasa.

4. Modaka

Ashvathamuladi Modaka, Agastiharitaki Modaka.

5. Ghrita

Phala Ghrita, Brihat Shatavari Ghrita^[7], Kumara Kalyana Ghrita, Kalyanaka Ghrita, Maha Kalyanaka Ghrita.

Pathya- Apathya

Pathya

- Use of Agneya Ahara Dravyas relieves Kapha Dosha.
- Shali rice, Yava etc. Annam, Madhya, Mamsa and substances which are capable of increasing Pitta should be beneficial.
- Fish, Kulattha, Kanji, Takra, Sura etc. should be used in diet^[10]
- Lasuna is also beneficial
- Tila, Masha, Sura, Sukta should be used
- Fish, Kanji, Tila, Udaswihcha, Dadhi
- Yoga and Vyayama.

Apathya

- **Guru Ahara:** Curd, cheese, heavy milk-based desserts, deep-fried snacks.
- Raw salads, cold beverages, ice cream, refrigerated leftover.
- **Viruddha Ahara:** Fish with milk, sour fruits with milk, honey with hot water, or equal quantities of honey and ghee
- Dry grains, popcorn, excessive consumption of millets, or overly roasted foods
- Divaswapna
- Ratrijagarana
- Stress

Modern Disease Review: Oligomenorrhoea and Hypomenorrhoea^[29,30,31]

Oligomenorrhoea

Oligomenorrhoea is defined as infrequent and irregular menstrual bleeding occurring at intervals longer than 35 days. While it can sometimes present without fertility impairment, medical attention is warranted if cycles become excessively erratic or infrequent. If untreated, oligomenorrhoea can progress to secondary amenorrhoea.

Oligomenorrhoea Causes

1. Physiological

- Adolescence: Anovulatory cycles due to immature HPO axis.
- Climacteric: Declining ovarian function causing irregular cycles.

2. Nutritional

- Malabsorption: Chronic deficiencies may cause permanent amenorrhoea.
- Starvation: Leads to oligomenorrhoea/amenorrhoea via gonadotropin deficiency.
- Anorexia Nervosa: Weight loss and leptin deficiency disrupt GnRH.
- Bulimia Nervosa: Weight fluctuations and depression affect cycles.
- Obesity: Increased androgen aromatization and low SHBG cause oligomenorrhoea.

3. Hypothalamic

- GnRH disruption from infections, stress, eating disorders, or drugs (e.g., contraceptives, antidepressants).
- Symptoms: Galactorrhoea, growth issues.

4. Pituitary

- Tumors: Pituitary adenomas cause hyperprolactinaemia.
- Sheehan's Syndrome: Postpartum pituitary necrosis.
- Simmond's Disease: Severe pituitary damage.
- Empty Sella Syndrome: Hypopituitarism from enlarged sella turcica.

5. Ovarian

- Hormone underproduction (e.g., resistant ovarian syndrome, POI).
- Continuous hormone secretion (e.g., ovarian tumors).
- Androgen excess (e.g., PCOS).

6. **Uterine:** Cervical stenosis, Asherman's syndrome.

7. **Vaginal:** Scarring from trauma/surgery.

8. **Endocrine:** Thyroid, pancreatic (diabetes), or adrenal disorders (e.g., Cushing's).

9. **Other:** Renal failure, cirrhosis, idiopathic causes.

Evaluation

- **Clinical:** History and physical exam.

- **Investigations**

1. Pregnancy test.
 2. Serum prolactin (<25 ng/ml normal).
 3. FSH/LH: Assess hyper/hypogonadotropic state.
 - GA4. Oestrogen status (estradiol levels).
 4. TSH: Thyroid function.
 5. AMH: Ovarian reserve.
 6. Transvaginal ultrasound: Endometrial/ovarian assessment.
- Address nutritional/stress factors.
 - Weight management for obesity/anorexia.
 - Hormone therapy: Cyclical oestrogen/progesterone.
 - Ovulation induction: Gonadotrophins for fertility.
 - Surgery: Laparoscopic ovarian drilling (PCOS), transsphenoidal surgery (prolactinomas).

Hypomenorrhoea

- **Definition:** Short (1-2 days) or scanty periods, often precedes amenorrhoea.
- **Causes**
 1. **Constitutional:** Normal variation.
 2. **Psychological:** Stress reduces flow.
 3. **Uterine:** Reduced endometrial surface (e.g., Asherman's syndrome from surgical trauma/infections).
- **Diagnosis:** Hysteroscopy, imaging.
- **Treatment:** Hysteroscopic resection for adhesions to restore fertility.

DISCUSSION

Artava Kshaya in Ayurveda refers to menstrual disorders like oligomenorrhoea and hypomenorrhoea, characterized by irregularities in menstruation (Yathochitakala Adarshanam), scanty (Alpata), lasts less than 3 days, and may involve vaginal pain (Yonivedana). It results from imbalances in Vata, Pitta, and Kapha doshas, particularly Apan Vayu dysfunction, affecting dhatus (tissues) and srotas (channels). Causes include improper diet, lifestyle, excessive medication, and suppressed urges, leading to Kapha-Vata aggravation, Pitta depletion, impaired Agni, Ama formation, Rasa Dhatu vitiation, and Artava Vaha Srotorodha. Symptoms arise from Vata-Pitta imbalance and Kapha obstruction. Ayurvedic management involves Shodhana (cleansing) procedures like Vamana, Virechana, and Basti, alongside Shamana Aushadhi tailored to Dosha-Dushya dynamics. Modern

parallels include hormonal imbalances, nutritional deficiencies, and stress affecting the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis. Integrating Ayurvedic holistic principles with modern insights enables personalized, comprehensive treatment for menstrual health.

CONCLUSION

Artava Kshaya, or the reduction in menstrual flow, provides a profound example of how ancient Ayurvedic principles align with contemporary medical understanding. Through an intricate balance of doshas and dhatus, Ayurveda offers a holistic view of female reproductive health, correlating closely with modern menstrual disorders such as oligomenorrhoea and hypomenorrhoea. The Ayurvedic perspective emphasizes the importance of maintaining equilibrium within the body, highlighting the critical role of Apan Vayu in the timely and adequate excretion of menstrual blood.

- The etiology of Artava Kshaya underscores the multifaceted nature of menstrual health, attributing disorders to dietary habits, lifestyle choices, excessive medication, and the suppression of natural urges. These factors lead to the vitiation of Vata and Pitta doshas, resulting in delayed and scanty menstruation accompanied by pain. This Ayurvedic understanding parallels modern insights into the hormonal and physiological imbalances that cause menstrual irregularities.
- Treatment strategies in Ayurveda for Artava Kshaya encompass both purification and pacification techniques. Purification methods like Vamana and Basti aim to cleanse the body and restore doshic balance, while pacification therapies involve the use of specific herbal formulations and dietary adjustments to support and normalize menstrual function. Notable Ayurvedic formulations such as Raja Pravartani Vati and Phala Ghrita are tailored to regulate menstrual cycles and enhance reproductive health.
- The synthesis of Ayurvedic principles with modern medical approaches presents an integrative pathway to managing menstrual disorders. This dual approach can offer personalized and holistic care, addressing both the physiological and psychological dimensions of menstrual health. By recognizing the strengths of both systems, healthcare providers can develop comprehensive treatment strategies that cater to the unique needs of women experiencing Artava Kshaya and related conditions, ultimately improving their quality of life and reproductive well-being.

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